



FESTIVAL  
REPORT  
2021

MELB  
INT'L  
JAZZ  
FEST



Thando with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, MIJF X MSO  
Opening Night Gala, Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne | image  
by Duncographic

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Principal Public Partners:



#### Acknowledgement of Country

Melbourne International Jazz Festival respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our Festival takes place, the People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, as well as to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the wider Melbourne community and beyond. We are honoured to contribute to the rich history of music making and culture that has taken place on these lands.



# Festival Overview

MIJF x MSO Opening Night Gala at  
Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne,  
photo by Duncographic

In amidst a devastating 18 months for Melbourne's live music sector, the Melbourne International Jazz Festival once again rose to the challenge, presenting a program like no other in a year like no other.

While our October plans fell victim to an ongoing lockdown, we shifted and adapted to ensure our artists and audiences could reconnect, collaborate and be inspired. Over a huge four-day weekend in December we brought jazz and improvised music back to our city's beloved concert halls, jazz clubs, outdoor spaces and unexpected places for all to enjoy.

Presented in person and online, the program showcased the strength, diversity and talent of Australia's jazz musicians. Our Artist in Residence Program paid homage to one of Australia's most prolific jazz pianists and composers, Paul Grabowsky AO. Our annual collaboration with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra saw the return of live music to Hamer Hall in a spectacular gala opening night event. Featuring arrangements by Jazz at the Lincoln Center Orchestra's Christopher Crenshaw (USA) and Melbourne's own Vanessa Perica, performers also included dynamic Australian singer-songwriters Kate Ceberano, Emma Donovan, Kylie Auldist, Harry James Angus, Josh Kyle, Michelle Nicolle and Thando, alongside MC Eddie Perfect.

The 2021 Melbourne International Jazz Festival (MIJF) was the first major arts event to return to the stages of Melbourne after months of extended lockdowns, and excited audiences of over 16,500 were treated to a mammoth program of 75 performances and events, featuring 416 artists. We saw the premiere of 17 new works, album launches and commissions. Women of jazz dominated this year's program, with performances led by Emma Donovan, Vanessa Perica Orchestra, Thando, Ajak Kwai, Alma Zygyier, Angela Davis, Aura and many more.

As part of MIJF's Sector Development Program, we delivered a national industry summit, MIJF Congress, welcoming emerging, mid-career and established artists to support sector cohesion and recovery. Alongside the conference, we presented a series of Artist Showcases—an Australian first for the jazz and improvised music sector—resulting in guaranteed 2022-23 national and international touring outcomes for Australian artists facilitated by the Festival team.

Our Artist Development Program expanded with the third iteration of our Take Note gender equity initiative, as well as the launch of our new First Nations Artist Residency program, delivered in partnership with the Australian Art Orchestra. Artists Ellie Lamb and Amos Roach were both supported to develop and present a new work at the Festival, receiving a tailored professional development program to support their career progression.

Our Community and Family Program provided opportunities for everyone to participate, with free and low-cost programming presented in restaurants, cafes and civic spaces across greater Melbourne. Children and families were treated to an extra-special event at Northcote Town Hall, with Jazz-A-Bye-Baby, presented in partnership with PBS 106.7FM.

MIJF was honoured to bring our community together for some of the finest experiences of local jazz and improvised music in December. It was extraordinary to share in the palpable delight of audiences and artists feeling Australia's live music capital coming back to life once again. An enormous thanks to each of our partners and donors for your unwavering support in helping MIJF navigate another challenging year of the pandemic, and realise the vision of our reimagined Festival in 2021. We can't wait to bring you an incredible line-up of exceptional performances and events next year as Melbourne hosts some of the most gifted jazz artists on the local and global stage.

We look forward to seeing you in October 2022.

Hadley Agrez  
CEO & Program Director



# MIJF in Numbers

75

live performances and  
events over 4 days

25

venues

32%

of program free

416

artists

1

major national  
industry summit

16,500+

attendees

7,979

attendees at ticketed  
events

8,527

attendees at free events

17

new works, commissions  
and album launches

9

cultural partnerships

17

performances and events  
accessible online

7

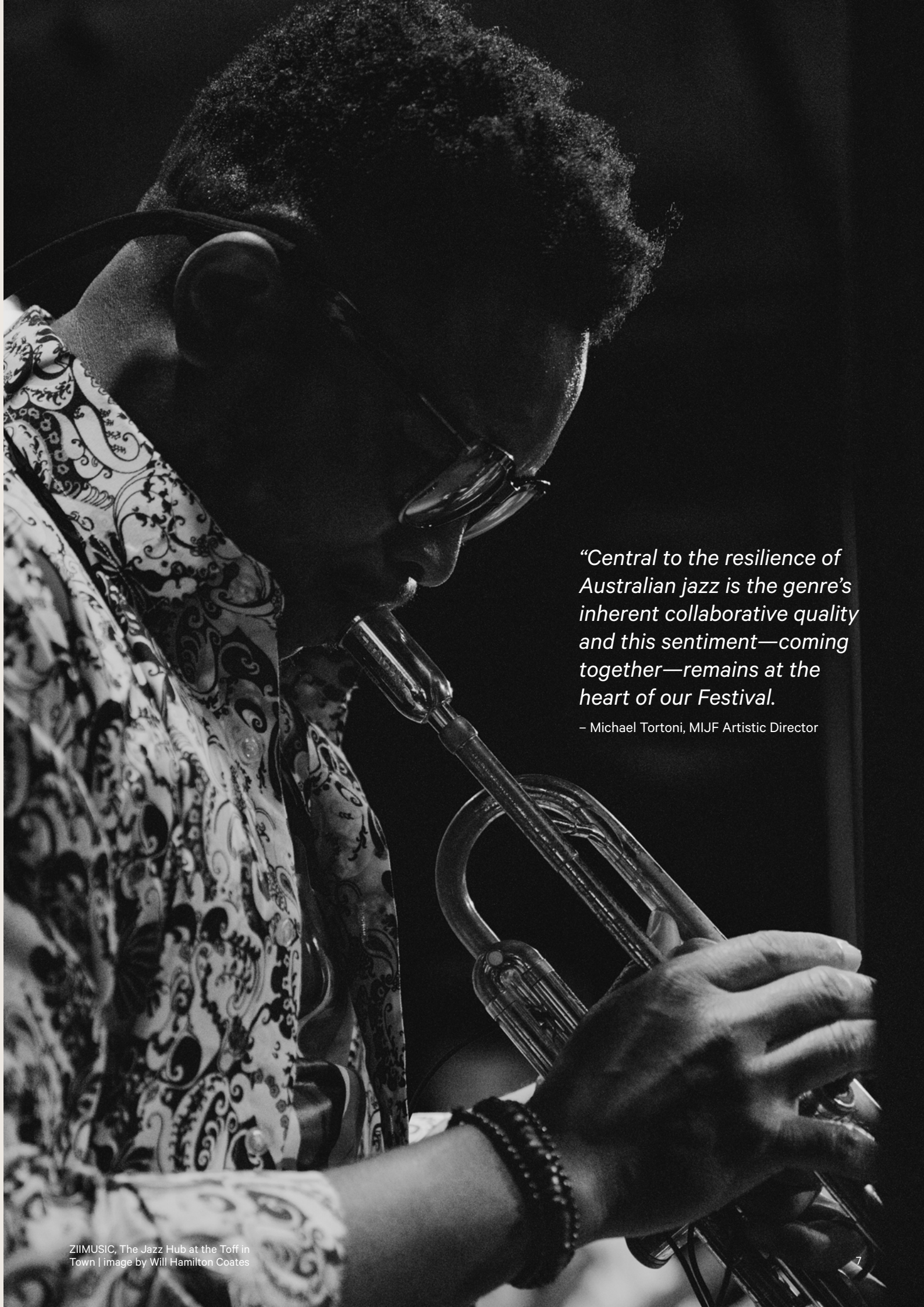
outbound touring  
opportunities brokered

2

year-round artist  
development initiatives

1,076

artists, industry members and  
students engaged through sector  
development programs



*“Central to the resilience of  
Australian jazz is the genre’s  
inherent collaborative quality  
and this sentiment—coming  
together—remains at the  
heart of our Festival.*

– Michael Tortoni, MIJF Artistic Director



# Premieres & Commissions

17

premieres

3

commissions

9

album launches

3,921

attendees

During the contracted—but no less abundant—four-day December Festival, audiences were treated to 17 premieres of new works including three Festival-exclusive commissions.

The 2021 Melbourne International Jazz Festival (MIJF) Opening Night Gala was the first major live music performance to return to Melbourne after months of extended lockdowns. Held at the city’s most iconic concert hall stage, Hamer Hall, the heartwarming event saw MIJF join with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) to present a spectacular international collaboration. Opening the 2021 Festival in style, this joyful celebration featured New York’s Jazz at the Lincoln Center Orchestra’s Christopher Crenshaw (USA) providing arrangements alongside critically acclaimed Melbourne-based composer, Vanessa Perica, with a series of special guests.

Accompanying the MSO on stage were some of the very best jazz talent in Melbourne—alongside the 17-piece Vanessa Perica Orchestra, the lineup featured celebrated Australian vocalists, Kate Ceberano, Thando, Kylie Auldist, Emma Donovan, Harry James Angus, Josh Kyle and Michelle Nicolle, with charismatic MC and vocalist, Eddie Perfect.

*‘...It felt like a small miracle to walk into Hamer Hall—along with 1,700 other patrons—and see a stage brimming with musicians in front of a starlit backdrop.’*

– The Age

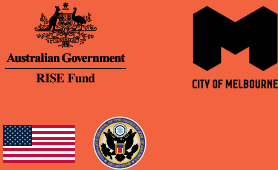
MIJF Artist in Residence, Paul Grabowsky AO collaborated with Australian soul icon, Emma Donovan to debut The Old Rugged Cross, a gospel-infused project drawing on Donovan’s early musical influences.

MIJF’s two artist development programs—gender equity initiative Take Note, and the inaugural First Nations Artist Residency program in collaboration with the Australian Art Orchestra—showcased the premieres of commissioned works at The Jazzlab and Melbourne Recital Centre respectively.

Elsewhere in the program, MIJF presented nine album launches—from the Sam Anning Septet, Magnusson-Beck-DiSario Trio, Spirograph Studies, Johannes Luebbers Dectet, Angela Davis, Mat Jodrell Sextet, Luke Howard Trio, I Hold the Lion’s Paw and The Bowie Project.

Proudly shining a spotlight on the next generation of Australian jazz, a significant highlight of the 2021 program celebrated the return of jazz to the City of Stonnington with the sold-out premiere of David Quested and Ollie Cox’s The Music of Radiohead at Chapel Off Chapel.

Proudly supported by:



Presenting partners:



Kate Ceberano and Eddie Perfect with the MSO, MIJF x MSO Gala, Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne | image by Duncographic



Sam Anning Septet, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic



# Artist in Residence



Paul Grabowsky, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic

Proudly supported by:



MIJF invited one of the country’s most distinguished musicians—prominent jazz luminary, Paul Grabowsky AO—to lead a dynamic series of unique collaborations and curated performances across the Festival to showcase the strength and talent of Australian jazz.

The 2021 Festival program saw Grabowsky perform in exclusive collaborations across Melbourne’s iconic jazz clubs and concert halls, presenting new works representing the rich and diverse stylistic spectrum of contemporary Australian jazz and improvised music.

In The Old Rugged Cross, Grabowsky was joined by acclaimed vocalist Emma Donovan and a powerful collection of Melbourne’s finest musicians in a Festival-headlining performance at the Melbourne Recital Centre. At The Jazzlab, Grabowsky’s trio performance featured Tuscan vocalist Ilaria Crociani.

Audiences also had the chance to hear candid and intimate insights in conversation with writer, Australian broadcast icon and long-time collaborator Steve Vizard as part of the MIJF Congress program.

# Connections & Collaborations

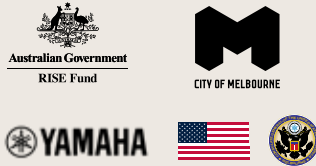


Paul Grabowsky and Emma Donovan, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic

9  
artistic collaborations

9  
cultural collaborations

Proudly supported by:



Presenting partners:



MIJF’s annual program showcases jazz as one of the few truly global artforms, traversing language and instrumentation barriers across the world to lend itself to bold and exciting boundary-less exchange that deepens our connection and understanding of one another. After an incredibly challenging two years that kept artists and audiences apart, MIJF represented the first opportunity to bring us all back together—and for artists to reunite, connect and collaborate in Australia’s live music capital.

MIJF’s series of premieres, commissions and Festival exclusives showcased new partnerships, unearthed fresh talent, and proudly facilitated cross-cultural and cross-artform exchange. In addition to MIJF’s major collaboration with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra to open the annual celebrations, the 4-day Festival hosted nine cultural collaborations and nine artistic collaborations, each providing enriching presentation and performance opportunities for Festival artists and audiences alike.

Enraptured audiences witnessed dynamic rhythms and cross-cultural artistic exchange with ZIIMUSIC and The Experience at the Toff in Town.

New musical friendships were formed across the entire Festival, including at a Closing Night double bill performance which featured a surprise duet—virtuoso pianist Joe Chindamo and dynamic vocalist Alma Zygier.

Longstanding friendships were also rekindled on-stage as the Johannes Luebbers Dectet launched an album of 10 compositions—one from each of its members.



# Club Sessions

MIJF's Club Sessions bring an immediacy to the jazz artform that is treasured amongst live music lovers and artists alike. A unique component of the annual festival, the 2021 Club Sessions were spread across two key venues: The Jazzlab in Brunswick and the Toff in Town in Melbourne's CBD.

Providing audiences with an opportunity to get up close to artists and experience truly intimate performances, the 100% local program showcased the outstanding quality of Victorian jazz musicians, featuring album launches, Festival-only collaborations, and exciting new works.

26

performances

15

sold-out performances

106

artists

3,185

attendees

Proudly supported by:



Presenting partner:



## The Jazz Hub at the Toff in Town

Melbourne CBD favourite, the Toff in Town hosted an eclectic program of free and ticketed local jazz over a spectacular 4-night program, featuring sell-out performances by a host of leading Melbourne musicians including Thando, Horns of Leroy, The Experience, Barney McAll, Jake Mason Trio, Magnusson-Beck-DiSario Trio as well as the much-loved Late Night Jams with local favourites, The Rookies.

Free early and late-night programming filled the bar each night, alongside jazz DJ sets drawing over 1,700 audience members to MIJF's Festival homepage.

## The Jazzlab

Spiritual home of MIJF, The Jazzlab in Brunswick hosted a series of intimate performances from much-loved acts including exclusive album launches from the Angela Davis Quartet, I Hold The Lion's Paw, Luke Howard Trio, Mat Jodrell Sextet, Johannes Luebbers Dectet and Spirograph Studios—alongside two full house late-night jams at this Festival-favourite venue.



ZIIMUSIC & The Experience, The Jazz Hub at the Toff in Town | image by Will Hamilton Coates



Spirograph Studios, The Jazzlab | image by Jackie Dixon







# First Nations Artist Residency Program



Amos Roach with members of the AAO and the Murrundaya Yepingna Dancers, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic

Proudly supported by:

The Harry Kestin Foundation

In partnership with:



The development of the First Nations Artist Residency Program included consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, community leaders and organisations, including Elders from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Boon Wurrung Elder N'arweet Carolyn Briggs, Songlines, the Wilin Foundation, and the APRA AMCOS National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Music Office.

MIJF acknowledges the incredible contribution First Peoples make to art and music-making, and aims to foster an environment and a sector in which First Nations musicians play a central role in shaping the unique sound and style of Australian jazz and improvised music.

Aiming to increase First Nations artists’ participation in jazz, MIJF launched a new annual program in partnership with the Australia Art Orchestra (AAO) which supports the career development of a First Nations jazz musician.

Award-winning musician, dancer and director, and proud Djab Wurrung/Gunditj Mara and Ngarrindjeri man Amos Roach was selected as the inaugural artist for this program and was supported in the development of a commissioned work that premiered in the 2021 Festival at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

Providing a dedicated context for First Nations artists to shape their unique sound and style, this program provided:

- A cash bursary to develop and perform a new work at the Festival
- A paid part-time position with the AAO
- A personalised professional development program
- MIJF Producer support
- Participation in the AAO’s Creative Music Intensive in Tasmania

*“To normalise the use of Traditional First Nations instruments in the general community adds to the sense of confidence to practice Culture openly and publicly. To be selected in the inaugural program was an exciting honour and privilege.”*

– Amos Roach, 2021 First Nations Artist Residency program recipient

# Take Note | Gender Equity & Artist Development Initiative



Ellie Lamb, The Jazzlab | image by Jackie Dixon

1  
new work created

117  
attendees

50  
high school students engaged from 2 secondary schools

106  
tertiary students engaged

As a national sector leader, MIJF seeks to shape a diverse, equitable, creative, innovative and thriving Australian jazz and improvised music sector. In line with this commitment, MIJF’s gender equity initiative, Take Note was developed in response to the significant under-representation of women and gender-diverse instrumentalists in the Australian jazz sector.

Now in the third year of the program, Take Note champions women and gender-diverse artists on stage and in schools across Victoria. In 2021, MIJF selected trombonist, composer and arranger, Ellie Lamb as the Take Note Jazz Leader—with Ellie performing their newly commissioned work ‘Between Worlds’ to a sold-out audience during the Festival, supported by a student ensemble from the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance at Monash University.

‘Between Worlds’ quickly became a highlight of the Festival program. Ellie also delivered interactive jazz improvisation workshops for 50 high school students from metropolitan Melbourne, and an online workshop for Monash University jazz students—offering insights for post-university career pathways.

*“The saying “if you can see it, you can be it” really hits hard... by aiming to promote emerging female and gender-diverse bandleaders, the (Take Note) program has the potential to provide role models for those young musicians who maybe don’t currently see themselves reflected in the jazz scene.”*

– Ellie Lamb, 2021 Take Note Jazz Leader

Proudly supported by:



Presenting partners:





# MIJF Congress

669  
industry participants

37  
panelists and presenters

9  
professional development panels

2  
career networking sessions

7  
showcase performances

1,860  
audience at showcases

45  
artists

7  
touring outcomes generated

## MIJF Congress Showcase Artists

- Paul Grabowsky & Emma Donovan: The Old Rugged Cross
- Aura
- Tamil Rogeon's 'Son of Nyx'
- JK Group
- Sam Anning Septet
- Julien Wilson's STOCK
- Amos Roach

A silver lining of the pandemic has seen MIJF reflect more deeply on our organisation's critical leadership role within the sector—expanding our focus on sector development with the delivery of a major national industry summit for jazz and improvised music: MIJF Congress. A dynamic series of artist showcases were also presented to facilitate cultural export—the first of their kind within the Australian jazz sector.

## MIJF Congress

Serving as the singular platform for the national sector to unify, collaborate and respond to a changing global landscape, MIJF Congress engaged hundreds of artists, music fans and industry members across the national sector in a series of eleven talks, masterclasses, panels, workshops and professional networking sessions. Held at the Melbourne Recital Centre from 2-4 December 2021, Congress became a platform for knowledge-sharing, skills enhancement and professional connection—actively supporting post-pandemic recovery and re-establishing sector cohesion in the wake of a disrupted eighteen months.

Now free to access as a podcast and a video series online, MIJF has extended the reach of the summit to a broader national and international audience.

## MIJF Artist Showcases

MIJF Congress also provided the country's first and only artist showcase for jazz and improvised music, resulting in guaranteed national and international touring outcomes for Australian artists.

Seven artists/ensembles were selected, reflecting the broad stylistic spectrum of Australian jazz and improvised music. The showcases featured new and exciting artistic collaborations and work by mid-career and leading Australian artists. All performances were professionally recorded in HD video and audio, adding to artists' asset inventories and supporting the legacy of their work beyond the Festival.

Since the Festival, MIJF has brokered two international and five national touring outcomes for participating artists/ensembles into major music and arts festivals—including Wellington Jazz Festival, Tokyo Jazz Festival, Sydney Con Jazz Festival, Sydney Women's International Jazz Festival, Perth International Jazz Festival, and Darwin Festival.

Proudly supported by:



Presenting partners:



(From left) Eugene Ball, Paul Grabowsky, Margie Lou Dyer, Tamara Murphy, Michael Tortoni, MIJF Congress, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic



Aura, Primrose Potter Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre | image by Duncographic



# Community & Family Program

36

free and low-cost  
performances and events

8,128

people engaged

MIJF’s community program focuses on fostering connected communities through the presentation of free and family programming across greater Melbourne—drawing on a range of partnerships to showcase the artform, and inviting new audiences to engage with the Festival experience in an easy and accessible way.

Free and family programming returned to the Festival in 2021, with 36 performances and events sprawling across Melbourne’s north and west, engaging 8,128 attendees.

Presented in partnership with City of Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley City Council, The Jazz Westside programs brought live jazz to unexpected places—including a range of local businesses re-opening to community after lockdowns. Footscray Night Market also featured a wildly energetic Festival opening night event, with three artists on the rotunda stage for an audience of close to 2,000.

MIJF was also thrilled to present a dynamic new series—Jazz Northside—in partnership with City of Yarra. This northside ‘jazz crawl’ saw MIJF pop up at iconic venues across Fitzroy, before an impressive double-bill performance from Ausecuma Beats and Horatio Luna at The Night Cat.

Three eclectic performances were showcased at the Northcote Town Hall in partnership with Darebin City Council—including a reimagination of pop and RnB icons’ catalogues through a jazz lens. MIJF’s take on the family-friendly Jazz-A-Bye-Baby format was a hit for adults and kids of all ages—featuring iconic Melbourne soul/funk trio, Cookin’ on 3 Burners and presented in partnership with PBS 106.7 FM.

*‘The Saturday night at The Night Cat and the day of jazz before it was fantastic. It was great to go to different local venues and see different acts on each. More please!’*

– Jazz Northside Attendee

Proudly supported by:



Gordon Koang, Jazz Westside, Footscray Night Market | image by Duncographic



Ausecuma Beats, Jazz Northside, The Night Cat | image by Duncographic



# Our Audience

“So good to see MIJF happening again in 2021—and it was a total treat to see that sensational all-Australian lineup! Incredibly challenging time and you rocked this festival. I will continue to support MIJF for years to come.”

– 2021 audience survey respondent

\$253k

at box office

66%

sold-out ticketed performances

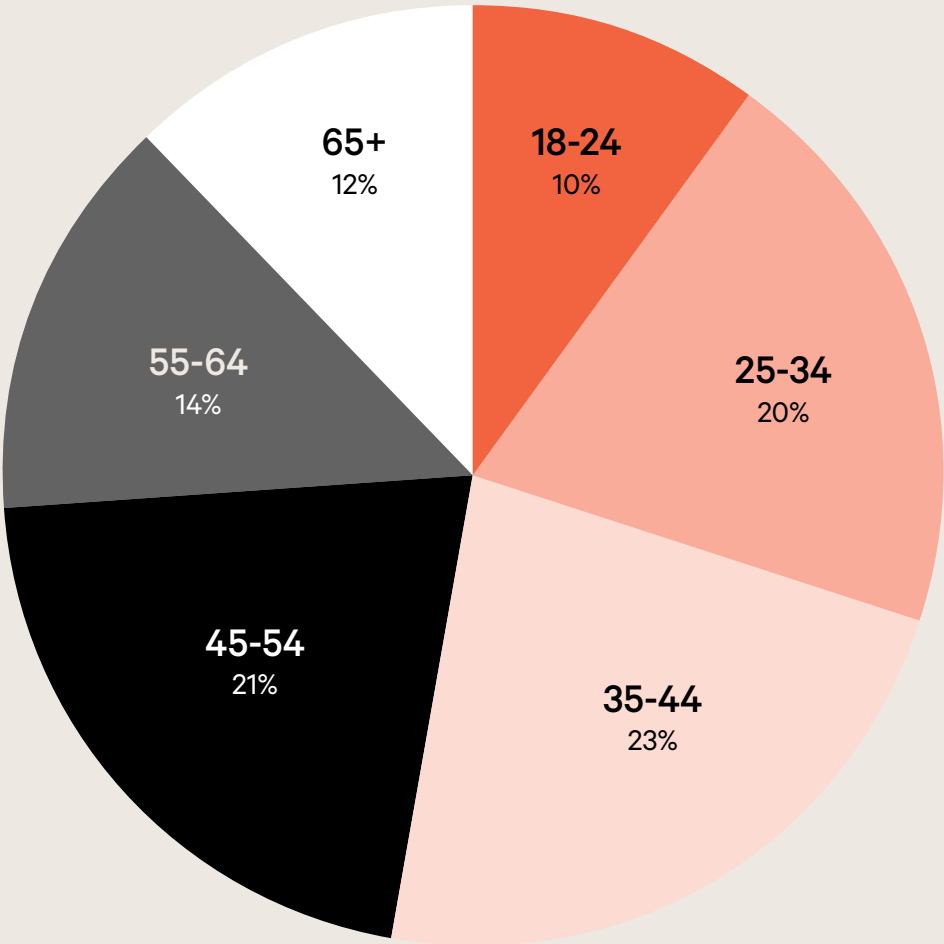
17%

first time attendees

96%

audience satisfaction

Age Breakdown:



Audience demographics:

- 47% Female
- 52% Male
- 1% Non-binary
- 19% CALD
- 3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 10% LGBTQIA+
- 5% Identify as a person living with a disability

Artist demographics:

- 33% Female
- 66% Male
- 1% Non-binary
- 21% CALD
- 2% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 10% LGBTQIA+
- 8% Identify as a person living with a disability



# Our Reach

250,427

website visits



16,500+

live audience



\$2.8M

editorial value



20,642

eNews subscribers  
2% ↑



25,537

Facebook followers  
11% ↑



4,095

Twitter followers  
2% ↑



6,402

Instagram followers  
33% ↑



Crowd at Ausecuma Beats,  
The Night Cat | image by Duncographic



# Our Team

## Board

John Stanhope AM (Chair)  
Michael Tortoni (Artistic Director)  
Rebecca MacFarling (Company Secretary)  
Sarah Bradly-McKay  
Toby Chadd  
Jennifer Darbyshire  
Liza Maimone  
Kat McGuffie  
David Valmorbida

## Staff

CEO & Program Director: Hadley Agrez

### Business & Operations Team

Business & Operations Manager: Shirrah Comeadow  
Festival Administrator: Merinda Dias-Jayasinha  
Ticketing Manager: Nick Turner

### Marketing & Development Team

Marketing & Partnerships Manager: Casselly Main  
Funding & Philanthropy Manager: Abby Elisha (until October)  
Marketing & Communications Coordinator: Chris Edkins

### Programming & Projects Team

Senior Producer: Tom Browne  
Associate Producer: Claire Cross  
Producer (Special Projects): Holly Norman (until September)  
Artistic Associate (MIJF Congress): Chelsea Wilson  
Production Manager: Andrew Saragossi  
Production Manager (until September): Fiona Murray  
Hospitality Coordinator: Archie Beetle  
Front of House (Jazz Hub): Ali Coad

Thank you to our wonderfully dedicated group of Festival volunteers.

# Our Supporters

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Melbourne International Jazz Festival relies on the support of the community to deliver Australia’s leading international jazz festival each year. Your support helps bring jazz and improvised music to life—showcasing the power of jazz and improvised music to connect and inspire—and enables the presentation and promotion of the highest calibre of jazz performance in Australia—all while fostering the next generation of talent.

As we navigate the challenges of a new world, your support is more important than ever. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our entire community of passionate supporters, and especially all donors who supported MIJF throughout 2021.

\$10,000+  
John Stanhope AM and Sue Bailey  
Jennifer Darbyshire and David Walker

\$1,000+  
Daniel and Tanja Stoeski  
Greg Shalit and Miriam Faine  
Isaac Apel  
Robert Macfarlane  
Steven Carew  
Tim Danielson and Athalie Williams

\$500+  
Anthony Webster  
David Valmorbida  
Greg Currie  
Lorna Meldrum  
Robert and Karen Boscarato  
Robert Cooper  
Anonymous (1)

\$200+  
Brian Glass  
Campbell Spence and Christina Sirakoff  
Damjan Vukcevic  
David Walker  
Eugene McCrory  
Iain Stewart  
Jude Gun  
Margot McDonald  
Mark Morand and Jenni Morris  
Miriam McDonald  
Murray Piper  
Peter Outhred  
Tzung Ding  
Walter Davis  
Anonymous (2)

This work was developed  
in a studio managed by  
City of Melbourne  
under the Meat Market  
Studio program.







# Festival Partners

Principal Government Partners



Major Government Partners



Major Philanthropic Partner



Public Partners



Philanthropic Partners



Event Partners



Education Partner



Festival Supporters



Media Partners



Industry Partners



Cultural Partners





The image features four large, white, sans-serif 'JAZZ' words stacked vertically on a black background. Each word is partially obscured by a thick, orange, diagonal bar that runs from the top-left towards the bottom-right. The bars have a slight gradient and are positioned behind the text.

JAZZ

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melbourne  
jazz.com

JAZZ

JAZZ